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THE LIFE OF JESUS IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN CRITICISM

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For the intelligent layman the problems raised by biblical criticism become most acute when they concern the Gospels and the life of Christ. Many easily grant the necessity and value of applying critical tests to the Old Testament but shrink from applying them to the Gospels. This hesitation is natural and deserves consideration but it is none the less mistaken. The historical method is only "trained and informed common-sense," and those who use it seek the truth just as we all seek it in our everyday experience, only less crudely. There is no reason why the Gospels should be exempt from such a method of investigation; in fact, there is every reason why they should not be. If it is in them that we find the touchstone of our destiny, then it is incumbent upon us to make sure what that touchstone really is.

Historical criticism, applied to the Gospels and to the life of Christ, has achieved results which are sure and extensive enough to satisfy fair-minded men. Extremists of both camps will doubtless continue to wage war, but the "man in the street" is in a mood to cry, "A plague on both your houses." Even when he does not know very much about it he suspects that everything cannot be accepted; he also suspects that the truth is not along the path of sweeping denial. These suspicions turn to convictions when he seriously studies the question.

With this mood upon us, therefore, let us try to set forth the probable course of Jesus' life. Criticism, with all its detail of analysis, comparison, inference, and construction, is here assumed. Many incidents, true and important, will not be mentioned, for our aim is not a "life" but a brief sketch. The nature and content of Jesus' teaching, as such, will not be discussed. All these important matters must here be subordinated to the main aim, which is, to answer the question, "In the light of modern criticism, what is reasonably certain regarding the general course of Jesus' life?"

The Early Influences under Which Jesus Lived

The historian does not ask, "How *might* Jesus have been born?" nor, "How *must* he have been born?" but simply "Under what circumstances *was* he born?" Our sources of information do not enable us to answer explicitly. It is not clear just when he was born, nor where, nor under what circumstances. It is certain that this significant event in the history of mankind occurred near the end of the reign of Herod the Great, somewhere in what we now call Palestine. If you should press me for my opinion regarding further details, I would say that he was probably the son of Joseph and Mary and that he was born in Nazareth of Galilee.

Concerning the days of his youth and young manhood, we have no clear information. The story of his visit to Jerusalem at the age of twelve (Luke 2:39-52) may not be historical, but it is certainly in keeping with any inferences that may fairly be drawn from his later development. If we are to reconstruct any picture of this period of Jesus' life, it must be by means of such inference and a few initial facts afforded us by the Gospels.

Flowing out of the past, from the Old Testament and especially from the prophets, streams of influence poured in upon him, through the channels of home and synagogue. In his reported teaching Jesus mentions by name Noah, Solomon, David, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, and the Queen of Sheba, and there are many other references which prove that he knew the Old Testament thoroughly. Whatever else we may or may not believe regarding his conception of himself, we are constrained to hold that he considered his life and teaching the consummation of Old Testament prophecy, and that he builded consciously on the basis of truth the prophets had already laid down.

Regarding his early environment, we know that he had four brothers and at least two sisters, and it is probable that he learned the trade of his father, who was a master-builder in Nazareth. He must have been intimately acquainted with the simple, homely things of life and cognizant of all phases of the common lot of the Jews of his day. Though probably not intimate with the rich, his experience was doubtless not confined to Nazareth. It is quite likely that our mental picture should include

visits to Jerusalem and to the larger towns of Galilee where Greco-Roman culture had considerable standing. The Jewish scribes undoubtedly influenced him positively as well as negatively, for, while he rejected the rabbinical system absolutely, there were broad-minded exponents of rabbinism, like Rabbi Hillel, whose loftier teaching was not unlike that of Jesus himself.

It is only fair to assume that these hereditary and environmental forces imparted form as well as content to Jesus' expanding thought, but they do not explain his exalted personality. Every life is more or less a mystery, but such a life is supremely mysterious because it is a supremely new creation. In ways that we cannot fathom, Jesus experienced during these formative years a new relationship to God. His religious consciousness was maturing along lines which constituted a new departure in man's religious history. Fused with this fundamental element of his life, there arose within him a new understanding of man's real nature and of his proper relationship to his fellow-man, a new ethical consciousness. The range, quality, and significance of this new life within him could not fail to produce a peculiar self-consciousness; a realization that he, the bearer of these new spiritual gifts, stood in a peculiar relation to the Father and to his fellow-men.

We are obliged to postulate such an inner development in the days of Jesus' youth and young manhood, else his later life becomes an entire enigma. With charming characterization, the Gospel of Luke reflects the similar judgment of the early church: "And the child grew

and waxed strong in spirit" (Luke 1:80). Again: "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52).

The Call to the Messianic Life

That John the Baptist preceded Jesus, baptized him, and in more essential ways prepared the way for him, is certain. That he sustained such a conscious relation to Jesus as the Gospels of Matthew and John record is improbable. John was largely the product of Old Testament prophecy and of the Jewish messianic hope of the Roman period. The latter gave him a hearing, the former gave him his hold. There is ample ground for the estimate of him pronounced by Jesus and treasured by Christians ever since. He stirred the religious and ethical consciousness of the people so that they were more ready for Jesus' appeal. He gathered around him a group of adherents who were thus prepared to become Jesus' chief supporters. He inaugurated the rite of baptism which, with him, differed from all previously known religious lustrations and furnished the basis for later Christian practice. Finally, he baptized Jesus himself.

The nature of the baptismal accounts and the testimony of the later parts of the Synoptic Gospels warrant our holding that, at his baptism, Jesus had an unusual inner experience which determined his whole after-life. It is not strange that his sensitive and ever-expanding consciousness should have recognized in the mission of John a peculiar significance. The previous development in Jesus' inner life would lead him to sympathize with John's movement

and, with others, to join it through the rite of baptism. This notable event seems to have brought his developing experiences to a focus and to have given him divine assurance of the rightness and reality of his own relation to God and to man. It convinced him that in the propagation of his own life lay the hope of men, and naturally, being a Jew of his own time, he associated this experience and work with the messianic idea and began to think of himself, probably, as Messiah. This would mean that he considered himself the chief messenger of God to man. Whether his conviction was correct or not, that is, whether or no his vision is to be reduced to mere illusion, depends upon the nature and significance of his whole life. That alone can prove to us that his lofty self-consciousness was justified. Jesus did not relate these experiences till later in his life, and then only to his closest friends. The externalized features of the baptismal accounts in Matthew and in Luke, therefore, must be considered unhistorical.

The gaining of any new height of achievement carries with it peculiar perils, and the application of new truth to a work-a-day world presents subtle temptations. The temptation which presented itself to Jesus at this time arose from these two psychological conditions. The parabolic accounts given us by Matthew and Luke really revolve about the one thought of compromise. "Yield the truth a bit in order to get men to take it." That there was not merely one period of temptation we should have to assume, even if we did not have the story of the agony in the garden. With the author of the Epistle

to the Hebrews we can be sure that Jesus was "one that hath been in all points tempted." But, doubtless, the glory of the baptismal experience was followed by a correspondingly searching trial. Old Testament passages came to his aid. The remembrance of the recent vision was fresh upon him and girded the loins of his will. These things, together with his now vivid sense of a present Father able to help, carried him through the first great test to a life of victory over all subsequent temptations, even those of the last excruciating days. Back of the accounts lies no external struggle, nor yet a mere phantom of early interpretation. It was a real but inward event which Jesus probably related to his disciples at a later time in parabolic terms. Jesus now stands at the threshold of his life-work.

The Chronology of the Ministry

The scene and length of Jesus' activity cannot be accurately determined. The unreliability of the Fourth Gospel and the meagerness of the Synoptics leave the matter in the twilight. Whether his ministry lasted one year or three, we cannot say. How much time he spent in Galilee, Perea, Samaria, and Judea, respectively, we cannot tell. It is certain that until the last days he was chiefly in Galilee. But he spent some time in Perea also and undoubtedly visited Samaria. It is probable, also, that he went to Judea and Jerusalem during his ministry, that is, before the final journey that ended with his death. It is Galilee, however, which looms largest in our records, then Jerusalem in the last days and, to a lesser degree, Perea.

The Early Preaching

We are told that he began in Galilee to preach the "gospel of the kingdom." What that "good news" was we shall not discuss here. The effect of his preaching was, at first, a general impression of authority. Mark says: "And they were astonished at his teaching; for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes." This, of course, was not any external or official authority. The scribes possessed that sort of authority and they had been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Nor was it merely because he considered himself to be the Messiah. It was because he was what he was.

Besides preaching, Jesus certainly performed acts of healing, chiefly on those who thought themselves possessed by demons. He doubtless healed other disorders and diseases also. The motive of this activity was not the exhibition of power for the sake of proving his messiahship, or his divinity, as John pictures it. At this time, at least, he kept to himself his thoughts of himself and he discouraged his followers from giving an undue prominence either to his works or to himself. The motive back of this, as of all his activity, was that of love, and Matthew is right in quoting in this connection a passage from Second Isaiah (Isa. 53:4): "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."

The result of all this teaching and of his many deeds of kindness, evidencing his great love of his fellows was an unbounded popularity. He was not thereby deceived, however. He knew that the real advance of the kingdom whose interests he had at heart was taking

place only slowly and in varying degrees. The parable of the Sower reveals this. "Behold, the sower went forth to sow; and as he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the birds came and devoured them: and others fell on the rocky places, where they had not much earth; and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them; and others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty" (Matt. 13:3-9). He knew that the hold he had on the many was too slight to keep them from losing interest when difficulties arose.

Early Difficulties

These difficulties soon came, for Jesus' plain speaking quickly aroused the opposition of the rabbis and brought about the great conflict which culminated at the cross. In Mark 3:6 we read: "And the Pharisees went forth and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him." John 6:66 accurately represents the effect of this opposition upon the mass of his following in words which, however, are given a different historical setting: "From that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him." Mark 7:24 describes the effect on Jesus' own plans: "And from thence he arose and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon [that is, outside the immediate sphere of the rabbis' influence] and entered into an house, and would have no man know it."

In short the rabbis effectually stopped Jesus' extended public activity in Galilee and obliged him to withdraw to quieter scenes with a small band of devoted disciples.

Jesus now realizes clearly the necessity of intensive work with the few instead of extensive work with the many. He rightly estimates the final result of the rabbinical campaign against him and begins to forecast the final issue. Either they must change, or he must yield, or he must die. That they would change he knew to be most improbable, that he should yield was impossible. He must have seen, therefore, that his death was inevitable and he must have begun, at least, to work out the reasonableness of it in order to bring it into harmony with his idea of God and with his own relation to the Father. Thoughts like that of Mark 10:45 must have been in his mind increasingly: "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." How far Jesus went toward a solution of this dark problem we do not know and he leaves us free to form our own theories of it. The Gospels support the conclusion to which our natural inferences would lead. He at least submitted to his fate, believing it to be the will of God and believing, also, that his death would, in some way, advance the interests of the kingdom.

For a time he kept all these thoughts to himself. The disciples were not prepared to understand or to endure them. Weeks of close intercourse, however, in these days of comparative retirement, must have enlightened their minds and strengthened their wills. At any rate,

at the end of his sojourn in the northern districts, Jesus seems to have broken to them his dire forebodings. In Mark, these teachings do not appear until the time of Peter's confession, and the psychological situation makes this view of the matter so fitting that we may conclude that any contrary representation found in the other gospels is due to unhistorical transposition or to later reflection.

The Change at Caesarea Philippi

Peter's confession came as a result of the close association with Jesus during the days of retirement in the north, and it was evidently of great significance both to Jesus and to his disciples. The Markan account (Mark 8:27-30) reads: "And Jesus went forth, and his disciples into the villages of Caesarea Philippi: and on the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, 'Who do men say that I am?' And they told him, saying, 'John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but others, one of the Prophets.' And he asked them, 'But who say ye that I am?' Peter answereth and saith unto him, 'Thou art the Christ.' And he charged them that they should tell no man of him." In John, this important event is given another historical setting and the passage shows signs of the author's peculiar viewpoint, but the essential content is the same: "Upon this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Jesus said therefore unto the twelve, 'Would ye also go away?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God'" (John 6:66-69).

Jesus felt that he had been deserted by all but the very few. If they did not maintain their faith in him, no one would. There was great risk in thus forcing the issue but he accepted it. Great souls must always take chances and cast the die. The test was successful. He was able to clinch their faith in him, temporarily at least. This partially fortified them against the difficulties of the teaching he was about to give them, and of the heart-searching experiences through which they were all so soon to go.

Jesus' Expectation of Death and Resurrection

According to Mark and the other Synoptic Gospels which follow Mark's order of events, immediately after Peter's confession Jesus began to emphasize the suffering and death to come. In Mark 8:31-37 we read: "And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he spake the saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But he, turning about, and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter, and saith, 'Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.' And he called unto him the multitude with his disciples, and said unto them, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it. For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? For

what should a man give in exchange for his life?"

To this passage we may add Mark 9:9-10: "And as they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, save when the Son of man should have risen again from the dead. And they kept the saying, questioning among themselves what the rising again from the dead should mean." Also, Mark 9:31-32: "For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, 'The Son of man is delivered up into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he shall rise again.'" And Mark 10:33-34: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles: and they shall mock him, and shall spit upon him, and shall scourge him, and shall kill him; and after three days he shall rise again." And finally, Mark 10:45, already quoted: "For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

We must bear in mind, in using these passages, the probability of their reflecting in part the views of a later time when the death and resurrection of Jesus had acquired paramount importance and a more definite significance. It seems to me, however, that we may fairly conclude from them that Jesus spoke of his death at this time and that he considered it God's will for him. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah would help him reach the conclusion that suffering belonged to the Messiah's part. His death would

thus present itself to him as the logical outcome, under the circumstances, of his life-principle of love and service and also, probably, as a means of blessing to many. We should have to assume the rise in his mind of thoughts like these, had we no references at all purporting to give his direct teaching.

Similarly, with regard to the specific sayings referring to his resurrection, it may be that these verses merely record what, in the light of their experiences, later disciples thought he must have said. Doubtless the definiteness of some of the statements is due to this fact. But, on the other hand, it is hard to believe that Jesus' own thoughts did not run out beyond his death. His faith in the Father and in the supreme worth of his own life and mission would not allow him to stop there. Furthermore, it is inconceivable that he would impart to his followers his innermost fears regarding the end of his life and work without communicating to them also whatever he had within him of faith, hope, and encouragement. We may not know just what he thought or said. Probably we do not know. But that he himself anticipated his death, without anticipating anything more, is out of keeping with his whole view of things. And that he consciously led his disciples to anticipate his death, without leading them any further into paths of faith and hope, is equally out of keeping.

In John 14:16-20 we read: "And I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him: for he abideth

with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you. Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me: because I live, ye shall live also. In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." These words cannot be taken as coming from Jesus himself, for they are thoroughly characteristic of the phraseology and point of view of the author of the Fourth Gospel. But, nevertheless, they represent for me what must actually have been the essential trend of Jesus' thought at this time and, as I have already indicated, what he himself thought he must, under the circumstances, have communicated to his disciples in some form or other.

If the transfiguration story is not entirely a myth, back of the evident legendary embellishments there may lie a real experience of an exalted nature—an experience which Jesus shared with his closest friends, growing out of the kind of conversation that was now uppermost with them. The accounts which we have of the event connect it with this point in Jesus' life, and with the very circle of thought we have just been considering. This experience, if such there was, must have led to a further strengthening of the faith of the three disciples immediately concerned—Peter, James, and John. If these inferences are at all warrantable, we have here another example of the intensive effort Jesus now felt called upon to put forth that his work might survive his impending death.

The Last Journey to Jerusalem

With such heartening memories Jesus "sets his face toward Jerusalem." His

state of mind seems to have been one of exaltation tinged, however, with natural forebodings. In Mark 10:32 we read: "And they were on the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them: and they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them the things that were to happen unto him." Here we see Jesus, brave, hopeful, and even triumphant, marching through Perea beyond Jordan, with Jerusalem as his goal, "knowing the things that should befall him there."

Mark, our earliest source, indicates that in this brief period before the end, Jesus again engaged in more public activity. Mark 10:1 reads: "And he arose from thence, and cometh into the borders of Judaea and beyond the Jordan: and multitudes come together unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again." Mark assigns to this period a considerable amount of undoubtedly genuine teaching. Luke gathers together at this point a much larger amount of Jesus' teaching, drawn partly from the "Logia document" and partly from his own independent sources (cf. Luke, chaps. 9-18). Luke's arrangement here is undoubtedly topical because Matthew gives many parallels to these sections of Luke, but places them in different historical settings. The common idea of Jesus' "Perean ministry," so-called, is drawn from Luke and therefore needs to be modified by the considerations just mentioned; but, it is undoubtedly a fact that Jesus repeated in Perea, though in smaller degree, the public activity which marked his earlier work in Galilee.

A few short crowded days in the Jewish capital, and the machinations of the leaders of his people were crowned with success. Jesus was tried, tortured, and executed. Out of the many events and voluminous teaching of these last days many of our most precious gospel traditions come. To be sure, accretions have crept into the teaching and incidents have been added without warrant. A simple parting-meal has been started on its course of transformation into a miraculous mystery, and in the Fourth Gospel Jesus is represented discoursing in the terms of Alexandrian philosophy. In general, however, the tradition is sound and we get a more detailed picture of Jesus here than at any other point in his life. To reproduce this picture would transgress the limits of our space and is hardly necessary. A few illustrations will bring to mind the exceptional quantity and quality of Jesus' activity in these days.

In spite of the plots of his enemies, he received homage in private from individuals, and in public from the many, especially from the provincials thronging to the Passover. There is no reason to doubt the story of the "anointing at Bethany," nor the main fact of the "triumphal entry." After his Galilean and Perea triumphs, he would naturally be the center of attention at the great feast and would arouse enthusiasm among the many representatives from these provinces. The latter story had doubtless been embellished, however, to make it fit into Old Testament prophecy. Similarly, the story of the "cursing of the fig tree" is probably an example of the development of a parable into a miracle.

The Last Week in Jerusalem

One of the most interesting phases of the last week of Jesus' life is his direct clash with the authorities. We feel the thrill that manifestations of righteous indignation always cause, and we get a new conception of the way in which virility and loving-kindness may be united in the harmony of a single ideal. According to the Gospel of John, Jesus began his work with the so-called "cleansing of the temple," and we therefore usually assume that there were two occasions on which Jesus performed this act. Undoubtedly the Synoptics are right in placing this striking event at the end of Jesus' life, and the author of John has transferred it to the beginning for some reason of his own and in disregard of the historical facts.

The record we have of the questions put to Jesus by the Jewish leaders and of Jesus' answers is undoubtedly reliable. This is just what we should expect from the rabbis in their effort to secure some basis for a valid charge against the Galilean. The only result of their questions has been to provide us with a permanent proof, not only of Jesus' superior moral insight, but also of his great intellectual acumen. These questions and answers paved the way naturally for a final invective on the part of Jesus against rabbinism and against its representatives. Seldom have men been so scathingly and yet so justly excoriated. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full

of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matt. 23:27-28).

How much of the reported discourses, about the coming of the kingdom (Matt., chap. 24; Mark, chap. 13; Luke, chap. 21), comes from Jesus, and how much from early Christian tradition, is impossible to say. Doubtless Jesus discussed these subjects at length with his disciples, especially at the close of his life, but we cannot be sure of the drift of these discussions.

It would seem as if the Fourth Gospel's account of the "Last Supper" were more true to fact than the accounts given by the other three. John relates the circumstances very simply and joins with the account of the Supper itself that of the symbolic act of "Jesus washing the disciples' feet." The Synoptics append to the record of the customary meal, with its discussion of "the betrayal," an account of the special institution by Jesus of an unusual rite, symbolic of his death and of its religious significance. The synoptic account is probably colored by later ideas, but in any case, the last meal of the disciples with Jesus must have been impressive and significant both to them and to him.

But we must not follow the details further. Jesus maintained his cause to the very end, battling in virile fashion against the enemies from without and against those "that were of his own household." His followers were evidently always in his thought and he spent much time preparing them for the inevitable outcome. He himself turned continually to the Father in the spirit of the garden prayer, "Not my will, but thine, be done." Jesus' death has been theologized out of all true

perspective. The unalterable fact that it was the climax of his life of love and service has thereby been attested, but often in unmeaning, if not actually illogical and anti-ethical, terms. We do not have to be trained theologians to understand either the necessity of the cross or its main significance. The essential values of this supreme event lie near the surface, but they also run down deep into the very heart of the meaning of life.

The Resurrection

We must now endeavor to present the probable facts underlying the resurrection stories, and estimate their significance. The signs and portents, the empty grave, the definite period of three days, the physical appearances, the forty-day period and the ascension—all these may best be put one side. We have to choose between an objectively real, but non-physical, manifestation of the spirit of Jesus, and some kind of vision theory. The first is easy to understand, granted the main fact, because it requires little psychological preparation on the part of the disciples. On the other hand, it is a bit harder to accept than the second because we make so much of the psychological in these days. However, through the activities of the Society of Psychical Research, we have latterly become much more accustomed to the thought of the possibility of this sort of event. In fact, there is no insuperable difficulty in the way of the modern man who inclines to the acceptance of this first explanation. On the contrary, certain tendencies in modern psychology and philosophy pave the way to such a belief.

The second theory would necessitate an explanation something like this: Jesus' impartation of spiritual life to his followers, especially to the receptive and impressionable Peter, was too great to be wiped out even by so paralyzing and unintelligible a calamity as his death. Certain words of Jesus, conveying hope at a time when all seemed dark, would linger in the mind. It may also be that these words expressed a belief in a speedy return and establishment of the kingdom. After the first despair, due to Jesus' departure, the new life they possessed from him was brought to a focus by their return to Galilee, and possibly, also, by definite forecasts of their Master. It then produced in these men, of an age, race, and clime predisposing them to such things, and first of all in Peter, whose individual temperament was most favorable to such impressions, a series of "visions." These were inner, spiritual experiences, easily propagated from individual to individual, and from individuals to groups. Thus they spread, probably from Peter first, as the records all suggest, and in every case colored, most naturally, by the content of Jesus' personality by which their lives were dominated.

On either of these two theories, the relation of our existing gospel accounts of the resurrection to the original experience would be the same. The actual event, whatever it was, little by little

became materialized in the progress of the tradition until the narratives become what they now are.

For a modern man, as it seems to me, the choice lies solely between these two views. In either case, the resurrection accounts prove the actual existence of a spiritual life and power which enabled men to brave danger and death in an unpopular cause, for an unpopular person; a spiritual life and power which, on sure historical grounds, we can connect with the life of Jesus of Nazareth; a spiritual life and power which, through these men, has come down through the centuries in ever-increasing fulness, purity, and beneficence. These facts must be interpreted in accordance with the thought-atmosphere of our age, but they must be interpreted, and no interpretation is true to fact which does not recognize the spiritual supremacy of Jesus of Nazareth in the life of the world. Thus, instead of a supposedly objective physical fact, supporting a structure full of mysterious dogmas, we get an objective, or at least equally real, spiritual fact—a mass of such facts, indeed—which goes to support the reality and supremacy of the spiritual life of Jesus. Through him we may rise to belief in a God, of like-minded love and righteousness, whose hands direct the destinies of the whole universe of men and things.